DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 312 857 EC 221 316

AUTHOR Gable, Robert A.; Rosso, Marcia L.
TITLE Use of the Behavioral Interview for Target Behavior Specification in Collaboration and Consultation.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 88
GRANT G008715088
NOTE 35p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Behavior Problems; *Consultation Programs; Cooperative Planning; Educational Cooperation; *Educational Diagnosis; Elementary Secondary Education; High Risk Students; *Interviews; *Learning Problems
IDENTIFIERS *Behavioral Interview; *Behavior Analysis

ABSTRACT

This paper reviews literature on methods of specifying target behaviors as a preliminary step in the provision of specialized instructional programming for low-performing, at-risk students. Careful specification of target behaviors can ensure that collaborating teachers in a consultation program have a shared understanding of the exact nature of the referral problem. Past practices for problem identification generally involved conducting a conventional interview with the consultee. Shortcomings associated with this approach are discussed. A rationale is introduced for employing an alternative process termed a behavioral interview, which yields clearer specification of the problem behavior. Six verbal skills that appear to be central to successful problem identification in a behavioral interview include: behavior verbalizations, behavior setting verbalizations, evaluation verbalizations, summary verbalizations, empathy verbalizations, and deflection verbalizations. To the extent possible, the interview should be standardized to ensure that target behaviors are adequately identified and to decrease sources of error and bias. Specialized training is required before prospective consultants begin the process. References are listed. (JDD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED312857

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Use of the Behavioral Interview for Target Behavior Specification in Collaboration and Consultation [1,2]

Robert A. Gable
Old Dominion University

Marcia L. Rosso
Norfolk City Schools
Norfolk, Virginia

Running head: INTERVIEW

1 Preparation of this manuscript was supported by Contract Number G008715088 from the U.S. Office of Education, Special Education and Rehabilitation Services. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position of the U.S. Department of Education

2 Please address all correspondence to: Robert A. Gable, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Child Study and Special Education, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 23529-0136

EC 231316

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Abstract

Target behavior specification is an intrical part of the fabric of collaboration and consultation. The success of the collaborative relationship depends heavily upon a shared understanding of the exact nature of the referral problem. This paper compares traditional and present practices for the identification of problem behaviors; advantages and disadvantages of each interviewing approach are presented. Next, a rationale for employing a behavioral interview for target behavior specification in collaboration and consultation is offered. Finally, standardization issues, training techniques, and future developments regarding the identification of target behaviors are discussed.

Use of the Behavioral Interview for Target Behavior Specification in Collaboration and Consultation

There is current concensus in education that an increasing number of students fail to qualify for but would benefit from specialized instructional programming. Will (1986) estimated that some 20-30% of the school-aged population evidence learning or behavioral difficulty in schools. This mounting problem of school failure is compounded by the fact that funds typically utilized in support of separate service options are dwindling (Will, 1986). Consequently, there is a need for increased cooperation between regular and special educational personnel to accomodate special needs students trapped in a flawed educational system.

Authorities point out one possible solution for serving handicapped, low performing, at-risk students is through collaboration and consultation (e.g., Haight, 1984). This service delivery option represents a partnership between regular and special education that is aimed at removing existing barriers that separate the two disciplines. Collaboration and consultation is conceptualized as a joint problem-solving process in which the consultant works with consultees to specify the problem, design and implement an intervention plan, and evaluate the overall success of consultation (Anderson, Kratochwill & Bergan, 1986). Currently, attempts to remedy problems associated with

diminished resources for a diverse school-aged population have resulted in the growing popularity of collaboration and consultation.

In order to ensure an effective and successful collaborative relationship, the consultant must possess a variety of essential skills. However, scant information is available on exactly what consultation skills, singly and collectively, constitute best practices. West and Cannon (1988) are among the few who have sought to identify specific consultation skills needed by both regular and special educators. They presented a list of 47 consultation skills that relate to interpersonal communication and which encompass the art of probing, paraphrasing, conflict resolution, problem solving, interviewing, and observation. Among those receiving the highest ratings were collaborative problem solving and interviewing.

Upon examination of the competencies related to collaboration and consultation, some experts assert that problem identification is the most critical component of the consultation process and upon which hinges the success or failure of the consultant-consultee relationship (Bergan & Tombari, 1976; Brown, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1982; Kratochwill, 1985; Kratochwill & Van Someren, 1985; Wilson & Evans, 1983). Problem identification involves the verbal specification of behavioral or academic difficulties that the consultee wishes to solve during the consultation process (Kratochwill, 1985). Typically, problem

identification is established through the interview phase of collaboration and consultation. Indeed, the lack of clear specification of behaviors targeted for intervention can be a major obstacle because students cannot receive adequate services if faulty or incomplete information is collected. Understandably, it becomes critical to examine how target behaviors are selected, and what effect, if any, the process has on the outcome of a consultation.

The purpose of this paper is to address the issue of target behavior specification as it relates to school-based collaboration and consultaton. First, past practices for problem identification are described and shortcomings associated with these approaches are discussed. Second, a rationale is introduced for employing an alternative process namely, a behavioral interview. Third, practices for target behavior specification follow along with a full description of characteristics that distinguish current from previous efforts. Finally, issues that correspond to standardization, training techniques; and, future directions for problem identification are discussed.

Past Practices for Problem Identification

To date, target behavior selection procedures have been the subject of primarily descriptive investigations. Limited attempts have been made to determine precisely the processes utilized for specifying intervention targets. Instead, much of the available literature has simply

reiterated the importance of proper target behavior identification. Only recently, has there been an attempt to examine the various methodologies employed by practitioners for specification of target behaviors.

Traditionally, problem identification was accomplished through the conduct of the conventional interview (Brown, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1982; Kratchowill, 1985; Gable, Hendrickson, Algozzine, & Scully, 1988; Goldfried & Kent, 1972; Kanfer, 1985). This type of interview allowed the consultee, in a given situation, to express his or her perceptions of the problem (Heron & Harris, 1987). However, the consultant used the traditional interview not only to specify problems, but also to obtain a deeper understanding of the consultee's situation (Heron & Harris, 1987).

Characteristics of the traditional interview. Early authors portrayed the traditional interview as a serious verbal exchange directed toward a specific purpose other than simple satisfaction in the content of a conversation (Bingham & Moore, 1941). The traditional format utilized a conversational approach which viewed the assessment of target behaviors as a process of collecting information through questioning. Later, more specific descriptions of the traditional interview technique emerged, including the declaration that an interview is an interactional procedure in which the interviewer and the interviewee participate in for the purpose of solving a problem (Kahn & Cannell, 1961). Fenlason, Ferguson, and Abrahamson (1962) posed that the

interview be viewed as an interpersonal verbal and nonverbal interaction with each participant working toward a common goal. That common goal was to successfully design strategies to assist the special needs student in overcoming learning or behavioral difficulties.

In all, the interview process has been conceptualized differently than a simple conversation or verbal exchange in that it typically involves more interaction besieging a rather narrow topic in the interviewee's experience (Murphy, 1985). Murphy further described the process as being goal-oriented, with detailed roles and responsibilities that distinguish the interviewer and interviewee. To illustrate, sample dialogue of a traditional interview between a consultant and a consultee is presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 About Here

Two broad catagories of traditional interviews outlined by Richard, Dohrenwend, and Klein (1965) included standardized and nonstandardized formats. The first of the two procedures is utilized when information is collected from more than one source. This is primarily accomplished by using a format in which the sequencing and wording of the interview questions remain constant from respondant to respondant; whereas, the nonstandardized process does not specify in advance the desired interview content (Murphy, 1985). The nonstandardized format is most useful when the

interviewer is ignorant of all the relevant forces intruding upon the interviewee. For example, the consultant might employ a series of nonstandardized interview questions in order to obtain information concerning the respondent's feelings. Regardless of the category, it is the interviewers responsibility to ask questions that facilitate accomplishing the goals of the interview. In practice, the catagories of interviewing formats (i.e., standardized or nonstandardized) may be combined, since they do not represent mutually exclusive procedures.

Support for implementation of the traditional interview has been identified in the literature (Murphy, 1985). One important reason for conducting an interview according to a conventional format is to acquire relevant and accurate information from the interviewee; and second, to define the concerns of the consultee. The third purpose of the interview is to aid the interviewer in the compilation of data on student strengths and weaknesses and teacher expectations as part of the diagnostic process. Finally, the interview provides opportunity to share information between the interviewer and the interviewee. Essentially, it is the primary purpose of the traditional interview that prescribes which interviewer behaviors are most appropriate in assisting the interviewee (Murphy, 1985).

Shortcomings of the traditional approach. In examining various aspects of the traditional interview process it becomes evident that some shortcomings exist.

Indeed, the traditional diagnostic approach to target behavior selection presents serious limitations, nonetheleast of which relates to the implication that there is a "presence of commonality" among the students targeted for collaboration and consultation. Critics contend that the concepts of individualization regarding student deficits and recognition of the uniqueness of student characteristics are often overlooked (Kanfer, 1985). This assumption of commonality implies the use of common intervention questions regarding student difficulties without regard to individual student differences. Thus, both the format and the presence of common verbalization characteristics command the focus of the intervention. For example, if the consultee verbalizes that "John has a very poor self-concept. I've had at least a dozen or so students just like him before, nothing works with those kinds of kids " then the focus of the intervention will be limited. Unfortunately, these assumptions of commonality rather than the specific problems evidenced by those target students, determine the objectives of the intervention and ultimately the identification of target behaviors. Not surprisingly, the traditional interview has been criticized for its failure to produce information useful to the formulation of an individualized intervention plan.

Gorden (1969) and Garrett (1942) provide further discussion on factors that diminish the usefulness of the traditional interview. They cited possible factors that

serve to reduce the validity of the content of the interview that include poor consultee motivation and the psychological inability of the consultee to produce useful information. Other elements that may inhibit quality communication include: inadequate responses due to lack of understanding of the questions, inadequate rapport, or a belief by the consultee that the questioning goes beyond the limits of the focus of the interview. If the consultee perceives that they are being patronized then their response level may become inhibited and a primary function of an effective interview is threatened (i.e., collaboration) (Murphy, 1985).

Additional opinion relating to shortcomings associated with the traditional interviewing approach suggests that many consultee's who refer children for services describe problem(s) in global and vague terms (Kratochwill, 1985). Failure of the conventional interview to identify deviant behavior, in specific, measurable, and observable terms may result in unsucessful treatment development and implementation (Gable et al., 1988). Ultimately, due to flaws associated with the traditional interview, the need for clarification and integration of target behavior specification is increased.

Consultants who rely on a conventional approach to target behavior specification usually seek to remedy vague and global consultee responses through the process of operational specification of verbal exchanges during the

interview (Kratochwill, 1985). For example, the consultant may verbalize the following: "What is it specifically that John does when you feel he's exhibiting a poor self-concept?" Even so, attempts to control teacher verbal behavior in an unstructured manner may not be sufficient to produce valid student target behavior identification. Besides, evidence suggests that what is assessed through actual classroom observation may differ significantly from the consultees' original verbal complaint (Kazdin, 1985). As can be seen, the problems associated with a traditional interview serve to substantiate the need for a solution.

Rationale for the Utilization of a Behavioral Interview

In that problem identification is a critical element in the fabric of collaboration and consultation (Bergan & Tombari, 1976), and in recognition of the shortcomings of the traditional interview, alternative processes for identifying problem behaviors are sorely needed. Indeed, Conoley et al. (1981) asserted that when consultants and consultees arrive at a shared understanding of the exact nature of the consultees distress, there is a 95% chance of satisfactory resolution of the problem. Conversely, when this initial phase is unsuccessful, the likelihood decreases substantially that the consultant and the consultee will be able to work together successfully to overcome problems of a special needs learner.

Recently, various alternative approaches to selecting target behaviors have emerged in the literature (Kanfer,

1985). One method that has been identified for target behavior specification in the consultation process is the problem identification interview, also known as the behavioral interview (Kanfer & Grimm, 1977). Kratochwill (1985) concluded that traditional versus behavioral interview procedures can be differentiated along "various methodological and conceptual dimensions including the assumptions, implications, uses of data, and various characteristics of the assessment process" (p. 3). A major aim of the behavioral interview is to build and maintain a level of communication that is characterized by mutual respect, responsibility and commitment (Gable et al., 1988). Thus, the collaborative aspect of the relationship is not only communicated by the consultant but it is also reinforced.

Other authorities have discussed the benefits of implementing a behavioral interview (Brown, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1985). They indicated that success in problem specification is achieved through stating problem solving goals, utilizing predictor variables to measure consultant effeciency, employing proven interview skills, and by adhering to behavioral principles to promote successful implementation of the intervention plan. Hay, Hay, Angle, and Nelson (1979) lend further support to use of the behavioral interview in underscoring the fact that it facilitates collection of an extensive amount of information about a student's level of functioning in a wide range of

potential problem areas. Indeed, a growing number of authorities assert that the behavioral interview will increase significantly the likelihood of proper target behavior specification. In their discussion of the behavioral interview, Haynes and Jensen (1979) stated that "the structure, content, and process of the interview can influence the behavioral analysis of a client; the attitude and behavior of the client; and, consequently the effectiveness of an intervention program" (p. 98). Thus, significant decisions can be made with regard to problem identification based on the information elicited from this interview approach. It should be noted, however, that the use of a behavioral interview has evoked some criticism because of the general prejudice of behavior analysts against measures of self-report (Haynes, 1978). In other words, the reliability of verbal behavior as an assessment tool comes into question, as it may vary from actual classroom observation data. Even so, such criticism does not diminish the usefulness of a behavioral interview as opposed to a traditional interview.

Present Practices for Problem Identification

Present practice for specifying problem behaviors in a collaborative contact is characterized primarily by reliance on the problem identification or behavioral interview (Keane, Black, Collins, & Vinson, 1982). Use of the behavioral interview in consultation ensures that teachers or support personnel (e.g., school psychologist), because

they are the primary problem solving participants, assume a collaborative role for assessment and intervention of academic or behavioral difficulties. Interestingly, target behaviors selected by the interview participants through the use of behavioral interview appear to be similar to target behaviors chosen for classroom behavior modification by school psychologists (Kratochwill, 1985). Thus, it can be inferred that a behavioral interview has greater reliability than a traditional interview. These target behaviors often relate to behaviors which are percieved by the consultee as aversive and disruptive to the classroom setting (Kratochwill, 1985). When the behavioral interview is employed, the selection of target behaviors also becomes more explicit (Kratochwill, 1985). It is the specific verbal skills included in the behavioral interview that clearly serve this important function. Kanfer (1985) identified this function as the process of the consultant moving from the consultee's complaint to the implementation of an effective intervention plan mutually determined by the consultant and the consultee.

Those who support a consultation service option emphasize use of a behavioral interview format in order to yield clear specification of the problem behavior (Kazdin, 1985). As Evans (1985) pointed out, the complaints of the consultee regarding the student "even if behaviorally-referenced, rarely fit into neat, mono-symptomatic frameworks" (p. 22). In other words,

behaviors are often complicated in that they are related to each other, as well as to major forces in the environment: rarely do student deficits appear in isolation. Acceptable as well as problem behavior appears to be "nested" or clustered together (Wilson & Evans, 1983). By employing a behavioral interview that attempts to deal with multiple responses, identification of other significant non-targeted behavior may result (Wilson & Evans, 1983). In all, the verbal statements that are inherent in a behavioral interview account for the participants failure to account for the person-environmental variability of target behavior.

Characteristics of a Behavioral Interview

Some characteristics of a behavioral interview may be related to changes in students' behavior that is achieved through the consultation process. Indeed, it is in the behavioral interview that the consultant listens to the consultee's complaints and then systematically attempts to elicit a specific description of the actual events that appear to shape the students learning and behavioral problems so that together they can specify target behaviors which are amenable to proven intervention techniques (Kanfer & Grimm, 1977). Gable and his collegues (1988) identified six verbal skills that appear to be central to successful problem identification. They include the following categories of verbal behavior:

1. Behavior Verbalizations. These are introductory remarks utilized to introduce discussion, obtain

behavioral discriptions of student behavior, or to determine intensity of behavior.

2. Behavior Setting Verbalizations. Questions that are employed to establish antecedents, consequents, and sequentials.
3. Evaluation Verbalizations. Statements that establish assesment procedures (i.e., data collection) and problem analysis and evaluation.
4. Summary Verbalizations. These are used to review information about a behavior or the conditions under which behavior occures, and to review recording procedures. Statements may also reiterate decisions that were made previously.
5. Empathy Verbalizations. Comments which are intended to maintain a sense of understanding and trust in order to enhance the participants rapport.
6. Deflection Verbalizations. Statements intended to redirect credit for the program plan or intervention. This facilitates ownership and involvement.

Certain behavior verbalizations or statements are employed by the consultant upon initiating the interview process; whereas, others occur either during or at the close of the conversation (i.e., the summary verbalizations). Verbal behavior that may be utilized throughout the interview as necessary include deflection or empathy statements. A

sample dialogue utilizing a behavioral interview between a consultant and a consultee is presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 About Here

In discussion of the concept of the behavioral interview, Kanfer (1985) offered the view that the process is a recursive one. He described the procedure as "a continuous interplay between information gathering, formulation of intervention objectives, and feedback from each step which shapes and refines the hypotheses about the optimal target behavior choice " (p. 7). Unlike the traditional interview, the behavior interview focuses on individual response patterns. Also, the behavioral interview persumes that intervention techniques can be chosen according to variables that affect or interact with selected target behaviors, rather than on a single consultee's complaint (Kanfer, 1985). As can be seen, the behavioral interview consists of a multi-stage process that requires the consultant to employ systematically both problem-solving and decision-making skills.

In summary, by engaging in specific verbal behavior, the consultant can increase the likelihood of proper target behavior specification, and ultimately help to ensure a successful contact. Kratochwill (1985) reiterated this notion by concluding that "the structure within which the consultation process occurs has an important bearing on

target behavior identification and ultimately on the success of treatment" (p. 51). The structural factors to which he is referring to as being responsible for influencing target behavior selection include: the verbal behaviors of the consultant, the verbal behavior and problem description of the consultee, and the conceptual framework for behavioral assessment that occurs during consultation. However, he specifically advocates that the degree to which target behaviors will be appropriately identified hinges, to some degree, upon the consultant implementing the behavioral interview in a standardized manner (Kratochwill, 1985). Despite its importance in target behavior identification, the interview procedure is often conducted in too informal and haphazard a manner (Kratochwill, 1985).

Standardization of a Behavioral Interview

As has already been described, the behavioral interview is comprised of a rather elaborate set of verbal strategies that the consultant employs to control the consultee's verbal behavior. It is the consultants' responsibility to guide the consultee through the six major categories of verbal behavior during the course of consultation interviews. The importance of this multi-step process was illustrated by Kratochwill (1985). He asserted that "the degree to which target behaviors will be adequately identified depends, in part, on asking certain types of standardized questions " (p. 51). It follows that if the purpose of behavioral consultation is to design an

intervention strategy and ensure its subsequent successful and faithful application, then the necessity for increased validity and reliability of the interview cannot be ignored. Clearly, uniform and systematic verbal interactions aid in eliminating one of the major barriers in consultation namely, loss of integrity in implementation (Kratochwill & Van Someren, 1985).

In consultation practice, the procedure for standardization of verbal behavior between the consultant and the consultee involves a number of strategies including "the development of formal interview protocols, standard instructions for administering the interview, a recording protocol and scoring criteria, among other features" (Kratochwill and Van Someren, 1985, p. 227). The reasons for adhering to a standarized approach to the consultation interview are well established. Kratochwill (1985) described four advantages standardization may have over traditional approaches for target behavior identification. First, the use of normative data and a standardized observational system can assist the consultant in target behavior identification. Second, standardization of the consultation interview allows for consultants to be trained systematically in the skills necessary to be successful in eliciting certain verbal responses from consultees. A third reason for implementing standardized strategies is that problem identification is crucial to the success of an intervention and a standardized approach has been shown to

be superior in achieving this goal. Lastly, standardized consultation permits replication in future practice. In sum, standardization of the interview process can aid in strengthening the validity and reliability of behavioral assessment.

Cautions in the use of the behavioral interview. Although it is gaining in support as an interview technique, Haynes and Jensen (1979) warned against unsystematic application of a behavioral interview in collaboration and consultation. They argue that, compared to other assessment techniques, the behavioral interview is susceptible to numerous sources of error and bias. Some of the possible sources of error include: (a) differences in race, sex, age, or social class between the interviewer and client, (b) the retrospective nature of the interview process and error associated with such data, (c) the social sensitivity and type of information elicited, (d) the content, format, and structure of the interview, (e) bias in the reports of mediator-clients, and (f) bias presumed to be inherent in all self-report measures (Haynes & Jenson, 1979).

However, according to Krotochwill (1985), by standardizing the behavioral interview, the sources of error and bias can be systematically decreased. Standardization is achieved through reliance on verbal questions which remain constant from interview to interview. Standardization combined with multiple interviews and sources of information strengthens the psychometric properties of the consultation

interview; and in turn, information collected can then be considered more reliable and valid (Haynes, 1978).

Training Techniques for the Use of a Behavioral Interview

Realizing the importance of the behavioral interview and the need for its standardization, authorities argue that perspective consultants should be well trained in the use of the behavioral interview prior to initiating a contact (Anderson et al., 1986; Brown et al., 1982; Keane et al., 1982). Training in behavioral interviewing may prove valuable in facilitating the role of the consultant and also in developing skills needed for intervention by the consultee. Interview process skills needed by the consultee include being aware of the procedures involved in obtaining consultation and understanding the nature of the collaborative relationship (Anderson, Kratochwill, & Bergan, 1986). Training techniques that have been found to be effective in promoting these skills include modeling, role playing, and feedback as well as didactic instructional techniques (e.g., written material, lecture, and discussion) when combined with one or more of the other methods (Anderson et al., 1986).

As has been suggested, a major purpose of the consultative relationship is to achieve operational specification of verbal exchanges that occur during the interview in order to identify target behaviors and ultimately to ensure a successful intervention. Thus, training procedures for the consultant consist of teaching

the use of standard questions to obtain specific information for problem specification. Brown and his collegues (1982) conducted a study to evaluate the effects of a training program designed to teach interview skills for problem identification. They utilized an instructional package consisting of a structured interview, written outlines, videotaped modeling, corrective feedback, and role-simulated interviews to teach consultants skills for carrying out a behavioral interview. The results of the study suggest that consultants can be taught to provide verbalizations during an interview that could lead to specific problem identification. Thus, a major implication of the study is that the use of the behavioral interview as an assessment skill must be specifically taught. Procedures reported in this study represent one method of training which may be useful in problem identification; but as the authors conclude, variations from their format of training may yield success as well.

Keane et al. (1982) provided further support for specialized training in the behavioral interview. Their study compared methods for training consultants in the behavioral interview. One group received instructions and were exposed to a model both via videotape, while the second group received the same videotape plus three hours of behavioral rehearsal (i.e., modeling, role-playing, and feedback). The results of this study indicated that individuals with minimal background and training in

behavioral assessment can acquire, following several formats, the necessary skills for conducting the behavioral interview. The authors demonstrated that the behavioral rehearsal group performed more skillfully in the content and style areas of their role-played interviews and, most important, in the generalization of newly acquired interviewing skills to environmental situations. Although much is yet to be learned, systematic training helps control the variability in performance typically associated with a consultation interview (Hay et al., 1979). Training consultants in the conduct of the behavioral interview complements previously discussed standardization practices in providing for improved reliability of the behavioral interview.

Future Directions

Recently, among professionals engaging in collaboration and consultation, it has been argued that a reexamination of the target behavior selection process is called for (Kratochwill, 1985). The future success of school consultation rests in part with continued investigation of the various components including verbal behavior of both the consultant and the consultee (Kratochwill, 1985). Related to this line of inquiry is the notion of an expanded assessment framework as a consideration for improving future consultation practices (Kratochwill, 1985). The introduction of such a framework would facilitate the use of multiple and repeated assessment to measure the same or

different problem areas. Multiple assessment strategies might include direct observation (associated with multiple behavioral samples), self-report, self-monitoring, checklists, psychometric scores, and review of student records (Gable et al., 1988). Utilization of multiple assessment may serve to improve the consultation approach in that it may broaden the scope of what should be considered a target behavior, expand understanding of academic or behavioral problems, and our knowledge of where and how they can best be treated (Kratochwill, 1985).

West and Cannon (1988) underscored another area for future improvement of collaboration between regular and special educators which may be indirectly related to target behavior identification. They concluded that there is a " paucity of research in general and special education regarding the skills or competencies needed by regular and special educators engaging in collaborative consultation" (West & Cannon, p. 56). Indeed, studies devoted to essential consultation skills of regular educators are virtually nonexistant. The danger, as described by Conoley et al. (1981) is in viewing the consultation process simply as a knowlegeable consultant giving answers and advice to a puzzled consultee. Rather, they assert that the role of the consultant is to facilitate "the creative, coping skills of the consultee and to learn from the consultee about the unique aspects of the problem and the consultee's situation" (p. 113). Thus, preservice and inservice training of both

regular and special educators could contribute substantially to the effectiveness of collaboration and consultation.

Obviously, the future of school-based collaboration and consultation is both promising and filled with numerous challenges. Regardless of the issue, more empirical support is needed to strengthen and refine alternative strategies. With regard to the main subject of this discussion, it should be underscored that reliable and valid identification of target behaviors is complicated by the complexity of the consultation process. Despite this methodological obstacle, further research is needed on techniques for pinpointing behaviors targeted for intervention by the consultant and the consultee.

Conclusion

In all, one of the most critical responsibilities besieging a consultant is the accurate assessment of target behaviors of a variety of individuals performing in numerous settings/situations. Heron and Harris (1987) asserted that interview assessments are conducted for one or two reasons: (a) to assist with problem identification or (b) to evaluate the effectiveness of an ongoing intervention. Typically, in a collaborative relationship the consultation interview is utilized as the primary assessment tool for specifying target behaviors. Within the educational setting, problem identification remains an essential element to the success or failure of collaboration and consultation (Bergan & Tambari, 1986). Close examination of how problem behaviors

are targeted for intervention supports the fact that the consultants' choice of target behaviors is frequently an incomplete representation of the consultees concerns (Mash, 1985). Thus, preceeding discussion has addressed the processes which underline the task of appropriately identifying measurable target behaviors. Past practices for specifying problem behaviors relied heavily on the traditional interview. Although traditional techniques may have some utility, experts advocate exploration of alternative processes for identifying precisely target behaviors (Kanfer, 1985; Kratochwill, 1985). Currently, the behavioral interview in conjunction with multiple and repeated assessment is the preferred means of target behavior specification (Gable et al., 1988).

A decade ago, few classroom teachers were called on to collaborate with their collegues to solve student problems. Today, with growing recognition of the importance of collaborative relationships, the process of making decisions about appropriate intervention targets is an important one which deserves continued scrutiny. Some processes have been proposed to guide in the selection of target behavior that have too often been ambiguous or incompatible (Wilson & Evans, 1983). One promising solution to this dilemma is use of the standardized behavioral interview. As has been emphasized, the likelihood of achieving a successful intervention and, in turn, strengthening the bond between regular and special educators, appears closely aligned with

the systematic application of a behavioral interview for target behavior specification.

References

Anderson, T.K., Kratochwill, T.R., & Bergan J.R. (1986). Training teachers in behavioral consultation and therapy: An analysis of verbal behavior. Journal of School Psychology, 24, 229-241.

Bergan, J.R., & Tombari, M.L. (1976). Consultant skill and efficiency and the implementation and outcomes of consultation. Journal of School Psychology, 14, 3-14.

Bingham, W. & Moore, V. (1941). How to interview. New York: Harper & Row.

Brown, D.K., Kratochwill, T.R., & Bergan, J.R. (1982). Teaching interview skills for problem identification: An analogue study. Behavioral Assessment, 4, 63-73.

Conoley, J.C., & Conoley, C.W. (1982). The effects of two conditions of client-centered consultation on student teacher problem descriptions and remedial plans. Journal of School Psychology, 20, 323-328.

Conoley, J.C., Apter, S.J., & Conoley, C.W. (1981). Teacher consultation and the resource teacher: Increasing services to seriously disturbed children. In F.H. Wood (Ed.), Perspectives for a new decade: Education's responsibility for seriously disturbed and behaviorally disordered children and youth, (pp. 111-126). Reston, VA.: Council for Exceptional Children.

Evans, I.M. (1985). Building systems as models as a strategy for target behavior selection in clinical assessment. Behavioral Assessment, 7, 21-32.

Fenlason, A., Ferguson, G., & Abrahamson, A. (1962). Essentials in interviewing. New York: Harper & Row.

Gable, R.A., Hendrickson, J.M., Algozzine, B., & Scully, V. (1988). Reintegration of behavior disordered students through behavioral consultation. Paper Presented at the Twelfth Annual Conference on Severe Behavior Disorders of Children and Youth, Tempe, AZ.

Garrett, A. (1942). Interviewing: Its principles and methods. New York: Family Service Association of America.

Goldfried, M.R., & Kent, R.N. (1972). Traditional versus behavioral assessment: A comparison of methodological and theoretical assumptions. Psychological Bulletin, 77, 409-420.

Gordon, T. (1979). Parent effectiveness training. New York: Wyden Press.

Haight, S.L. (1984). Special education teacher consultant: Idealism versus realism. Exceptional Children, 50, 507-515.

Hay, W.M., Hay, L.R., Angle, H.V., & Nelson, R.D. (1979). The reliability of problem identification in the behavioral interview. Behavioral Assessment, 1, 107-118.

Haynes, S.N. (1978). Principles of behavioral assessment. New York: Gardner Press.

Haynes, S.N., & Jensen, B.J. (1979). The interview of a behavioral assessment instrument. Behavioral Assessment, 1, 97-106.

Heron, T.E., & Harris, K.C. (1986). The educational consultant. (2nd ed). Austin, TX.: Pro-ed.

Kahn, R,, & Cannell, C. (1961). The dynamics of interviewing. New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Kanfer, F.H., & Grimm, L.G. (1977). Behavioral analysis: Selecting target behaviors in the interview. Behavior Modification, 1, 7-28.

Kazdin, A.E. (1985). Selection of target behaviors: The relationship of the treatment focus to clinical dysfunction. Behavioral Assessment, 7, 33-47.

Keane, T.M., Black, J.L., Collins, Jr., F.L., & Vinson, M.C. (1982). A skills training program for teaching the behavioral interview. Behavioral Assessment, 4, 53-62.

Kratochwill, T.R. (1985). Selection of target behaviors in behavioral consultation. Behavioral Assessment, 7, 49-61.

Kratochwill, T.R. (1985). Selection of target behaviors: Issues and directions. Behavioral Assessment, 7, 3-5.

Kratochwill, T.R., & Van Someren, K.R. (1985). Barriers to treatment success in behavioral consultation: Current limitations and future directions. Journal of School Psychology, 23, 225-239.

Mash, E.J. (1985). Some comments on target selection in behavior therapy. Behavioral Assessment, 7, 63-78.

Murphy, J. (1985). Best practices in interviewing. In A. Thomas & J. Grimes (Eds.). Best practices in school psychology,(pp. 311-319). Washington, D.C.: National Association of School Psychologists.

Richardson, S., Dohrenwend, B., & Klein, D. (1965). Interviewing: Its forms and functions. New York: Basic Books.

West, J.F., & Cannon, G.S. (1988). Essential collaborative consultation competencies for regular and special educators. Journal of Learning Disabilities, 21, 56-63.

Will, M.C. (1986). Educating children with learning problems: A shared responsibility. Exceptional Children, 52, 411-415.

Wilson, F.E., & Evans, I.M. (1983). The reliability of target-behavior selection in behavioral assessment. Behavioral Assessment, 5, 15-32.

Table 1
Consultant-Consultee Traditional Interview

Consultant	Consultee
How did you decide which reading level to use?	There's three levels, all students fit into one of them.
Why is that series used?	Um, I don't know. The district has always used it.
I think that series only goes up to a fifth grade level. What happens if a student reads on a sixth grade level?	I only have one, John, who is above a fifth grade level.
What do you do with him?	Well, he doesn't need as much instruction as the others, so I let him continue at his own pace.
Could you talk with me more about your use of the Scott-Johnson series with your first reading group today?	Yea, I use it even though they can't read all the words. It's the lowest level.
Have you looked at other series that might be easier for them to read?	Yea, but then they'll never try to learn new words.
Which ones have you looked at?	Oh, I picked up the Jones, the Reader, and the HJC series.
Any reason why you chose those to look at?	No, they were the only ones I saw lying around in the textbook office.
Did you try any of them with your first reading group?	Yea, but they were too easy. The kids knew all the words.
Which one did the the students know all the words in?	In all of them. I just felt like the kids didn't even have to try.

Table 2
Consultant-Consultee Behavioral Interview

Consultant	Consultee
I understand that John has been very disruptive to your class. What does he do that is most disruptive? (Behavior verbalization)	He is really a problem student. He just destroys my class. I've tried everything, nothing stops his calling out or aggressive behavior.
John sounds just like a student I had last year. I know how you feel, I almost pulled my hair out. (Empathy) Which bothers you the most about John - calling out or aggression? (Behavior verbalizations)	Um, aggression. He's always beating up on somebody.
What usually happens when John starts a fight? (Behavior setting verbalizations)	It usually happens during seatwork or at transition times.
What do you do when John starts a fight? (Behavior setting verbalizations)	Send him to the office.
How do the other students act when John starts a fight? (Behavior setting verbalizations)	Oh, they get all wound up. Then it takes forever before everyone is settled down again.
Boy, it really sounds like you have your hands full. (Empathy) It sounds to me like he's pretty disruptive during less structured times. Is that right? (Evaluation verbalizations)	Yep, you got it.
I'll visit Monday morning during John's seatwork and stay until lunch to watch John during transition also. I'll take some data and rely on you to tell me whether or not his behavior is typical. Okay? (Evaluation verbalizations)	That would be great. I'm sure he'll be up to performing. I just hope we can come up with a solution after that.

Consultant	Consultee
Oh, I think we can. In fact, you know something you said earlier in the hall reminded me of a procedure Mrs. Hall tried last year that might work for us. (Deflection verbalizations)	Oh, good. I'll look forward to our next meeting.
Okay, well what I believe we agreed that the problem with John is aggression and that I'm going to come watch John on Monday at 10:30 am. (Summary vebalizations)	Exactly.